



## News of The Kenilworth Union Church

211 Kenilworth Avenue • Kenilworth, Illinois 60043 • (847) 251-4272

[www.kuc.org](http://www.kuc.org)

February 14, 2010

*2010 Outreach Benefit Pre-party! Join us at Little Ricky's at 540 Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka, IL on Thursday, Feb. 25, 6-9 pm. Bring spouses and friends. We will also sign up volunteers to help with the benefit. There will be opportunities to help before and during the event. This year's benefit is Friday, Apr. 30 at Michigan Shores, 6:00 pm.*

### milestone

We welcome to baptism later today Reagan MacKenzie Schoenfeld, daughter of Alison (List) and Peter Joseph Schoenfeld.

### Altar Flowers

The altar flowers are given in loving memory of Edward J. Swan, David J. Swan, and Betty E. Goldberg by the family of Edward T. Swan. The lavabo flowers are given in memory of Sumner Rahr by his family.

### A Joyful Noise

It may still be cold outside, but AJN wants you to THINK SUMMER! Applications are being accepted for our Summer Program for Two and Three-Year-olds. Taught by our very own AJN teachers, camp meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 11 am from June 22 to July 29. Invite a friend! You do not need to be a member of KUC to join the fun. To learn more, please contact Kris Whisner at 847-853-1738 or [kristenwhisner@comcast.net](mailto:kristenwhisner@comcast.net).

### The Robinson Garden

It's time again to order your personalized brick(s). Support AJN and honor a loved one by giving them their own unique piece in the playground. Leave a lasting legacy for your family at KUC. Each brick is \$100 and forms can be picked up at the front desk. Order by Feb. 28; contact Heidi Black if you have any questions, 847-386-6310.

### Children's Ministries

**Jesus Heals Man through the Roof (Lambs-4th)** Jesus taught that God wants us to be well and whole. Jesus cured many people of their afflictions and illnesses. But he said that they were cured by their own faith in God.

**What Was It Like? Bingo (5th & 6th)** Today we will play a game comparing life in Biblical times to life today.

**Jesus and his Disciples/Being Called (7th & 8th)** How did Jesus choose his friends? What does it mean to be called? Does Jesus want us to go out and try to convert others to Christianity?

## Youth Ministries

Teen Bible Study will **not** be held on February 14. The next teen bible study session will be February 28 at 10:30 am in the manse. All are welcome. Contact Silvi Vahtra at svahtra@kuc.org.

There will be no JYG meeting on February 17, Ash Wednesday. Youth and their families are encouraged to attend the KUC Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 pm in the Schmidt Chapel.

The Talent Show is on Sunday, February 28. If you would like to help with the preparations or if you have an act to perform, call Rev. Sarah Garcia at 847-853-2104 or sgarcia@kuc.org.

## New Member Classes

We invite all persons and families interested in joining Kenilworth Union Church to our Winter New Member Classes. The next class meets on February 28. New Members will be received by the congregation on Sunday, March 7, 2010. Please fill out the "Welcome" card in the pew or call Kathy McCabe, 847-853-2636.

## Adult Education

We invite you to see the documentary film "Make No Little Plans" - Daniel Burnham and the American City on Wednesday, Feb. 24, 7:00-8:30 pm. Meet KUC members: Judith McBrien, Director/Producer and Kathy Piegras, Burnham family member.

## Book discussion group

We will again be offering a discussion group about the ideas presented in the book, *One Month to Live* by Kerry and Chris Shook. There is no need to have read the book beforehand. The group will meet at KUC on Sundays, from 11:45-12:45 through March 7. Class size is limited.

Please contact Beverly Kirk (frankbev@comcast.net) or Jennifer Burch (jenburch@comcast.net) for more information.

## Bible Study

Adult Bible study continues on Wednesdays at 9 am. We will be looking at eight core Biblical stories we all should know. These stories tell us about the powerful presence of God in

the lives of God's people. While telling the stories we will have the opportunity to connect them to our own story and to deepen our understanding and practice of faith.

## Soul Sisters

Enjoy fellowship with other women, interesting discussions and an opportunity to deepen your faith and friendships. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 9:30 in the Culbertson room. Please call Rev. Jane Lionberger, 847-853-2009 if you have any questions. Babysitting is available. Call or email Katie Nahrwold to make a babysitting reservation: 847-251-1024; KNahrwold@comcast.net

## Stewardship

As of February 3, 2010, we have received pledges/gifts totaling \$1, 808, 427.48 representing approximately 95% of our goal. We strongly encourage families who have not pledged or made a gift to do so now. Please call the church office at 847-853-2199 to arrange your pledge/gift or go to [www.kuc.org](http://www.kuc.org) to make a pledge online.

We are grateful to all the KUC families and charitable foundations who have participated in the Stewardship campaign.

*The Care Guild Leader for January is Hope Poor. To volunteer or to let us know where help is needed, please call the Care Guild number at (847) 853-3534.*



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# From the Pulpit: January 31, 2010

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Dr. Andrew D. Chaney “What God’s Love Is, and Is Not”

“If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13)

There is so much to learn about how to survive in the snow and out of the snow. I have learned why we have mudrooms, why we have to organize mittens by the door, and I have learned a lot about shoveling snow. I truly understand why the Eskimos have over a dozen words for snow- there are so many types of snow!

Through the years of our lives we engage in relationships with many nuances. We learn what love is and how to express love. The Greeks recognized this by having several words for love. There is the word *phileo* for familial affection, the word *storgi* for friendship, the type of love one has for their family of faith, *eros* for erotic love, and then the word that Paul writes about today, *agape* love. This *agape* love is the one we need to learn the most about. It is the love that characterizes God’s love. Paul teaches us what God’s love is and is not in this familiar chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13. *Agape* love looks to another before it looks to self, and loves without condition. It is a love so strong that it sacrifices itself for another.

The psychologist Karl Menniger said that love was the medicine for the sickness of the human race, and if you give or receive love, you experience some type of healing. We can all agree with that. Paul would agree as well, except he would most likely take the definition of love to an even higher level- including human healing but leading finally to a human-divine connection.

There is no greater link to God than love. Understanding God’s love and trying to model God’s *agape* love takes great effort. Many times we tend to protect ourselves from that kind of love by either rejecting it or by being too complacent to take the steps toward it.

Once Charlie Brown asked Lucy to

try love- love would make her a much happier person. She answered him, “You blockhead, I love the world, it’s the people I can’t stand.” What a simple yet profound way to describe many of our attitudes. We may be living lives that have somehow pulled back from loving people with the type of love described in 1 Corinthians 13. Maybe our lives are so busy with other things that we have made a conscious or subconscious decision to do less than God desires. There are terrible consequences when we ignore God’s command to love.

C.S. Lewis touched on this idea of how we protect our hearts from love in his book, *The Four Loves*. Here is an excerpt:

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin or your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless, airless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable...The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers...of love is Hell.”  
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What stark words from C.S. Lewis but they underscore the fact that there is nothing more important in our life in our ability to connect with God, in our ability to connect with others, and in our spiritual development than love.

Paul’s description of love lists both positive and negative attributes of this *agape* love. Each one of these characteristics holds behind it a mountain of life stories that we can recall when we

reflect upon love's power in our lives.

When we are truly patient, agape love cuts through the dysfunction in our lives that others threaten to create. It does not allow others to inhibit our own growth. When we react lovingly to another who lashes out at us, the suffering from the evil that has come our way is greatly diminished. I remember my father telling me in grade school about people who called others bad names. "You control yourself- maybe you cannot control them, but you control yourself- pray for your enemies as the Bible said and you will not be imprisoned by their negativity."

This relates to our professional lives. President Abraham Lincoln's reaction to Edwin Stanton's offensive remarks illustrates this point. Even though Edwin Stanton called Lincoln a clown and a gorilla, Lincoln appointed him to direct the war effort. Lincoln's closest supporters could not understand why he would appoint what many would characterize as an enemy to one of the most vital posts in government. When asked how he could do this Lincoln responded, "Because he is the best man for the job." At Lincoln's grave Stanton made a very public comment that Lincoln was the best ruler of men God had put upon the earth. What a total reversal...Lincoln's powerful display of God's love within helped him to function as a President without personal interference. Maybe there is someone in the workplace who simply does not like you. Would your Christian love be powerful enough to change that person? That is not the question. Sometimes people are not willing to change who they are...and you cannot take that on as your life's mission...but you can change yourself. You can act with love! Paul wrote, "Love is patient..." Be patient enough to see clearly how you should react to others who strike out against you.

There is a lot of work involved in this type of love. Agape love takes the most effort, the most risks, and the most determination. The principle is lived out in the workplace and also in our marriages. Sometimes couples forget that love requires constant work and they take love for granted. Paul wrote, "Love is kind..." and kindness is sometimes the first thing to fly out the window in marriages. Love takes effort and work!

There is a vignette about newlyweds in Reader's Digest. The husband slowly loses the kindness that undergirds love. The first year of marriage his bride was sick and he took her to the hospital and delivered food daily. The vignette proceeds through years of marriage with each level of care becoming less generous and kind until the 7<sup>th</sup> year when the husband asks her

to stop coughing and exclaims, "Are you trying to give me pneumonia?"

Love is not a free for all giving license to walk all over another since we love each other. Love has strict commands that Paul lists. When an engaged couple comes in for discussion, I underscore the fact that love is not a feeling, it is a command from God, it is a commitment- a commitment to live out 1 Corinthians 13 to be patient, kind, not insist upon his or her own way, and not resentful....

Paul Harvey's guest Carl Coleman talked about how a woman hit his car. As they were exchanging papers, she was distraught. She and her husband had just purchased the new car just days prior. She was beside herself worrying about how her husband would react. Then she unfolded a piece of paper from the glove compartment- a note he wrote to her- "In case of accident, remember, it is you I love, not the car..."

That is the kind of love that God commands. This helps us understand the boundaries God puts on love. Just as God's love is portrayed in the Bible as a flowing stream with beautiful trees bearing fruit on its banks, we must see those characteristics in 1 Corinthians 13 as the banks of the stream. If we had no banks, the stream would dissipate into a washed out swamp. There are real obligations involved in love, obligations to behave properly.

Love also demands that when others try to destroy the banks of this stream we must not hold resentment in our hearts. Love must fill up our hearts and resentment against another can take up a lot of space. How can we fully love when our hearts are poisoned with bitter resentment- the answer is- we cannot fully love. We must release ourselves from resentment against another and move on with life. We must pour out what consumes us and fill ourselves again with God's beautiful love.

Many worship services feature a portion of the Psalms as our second Scripture reading. The Psalms contain such emotion, both highs and lows, and many were written by King David.

Yet Scripture reveals that at the end of David's life, on his deathbed, he struck out against a man who had heckled him as he left Jerusalem to avoid fighting his own son in battle. David's troops asked to strike down the heckler and David said no. Then on his deathbed, David recalled the heckler and made a statement as if to say, "Ok, you know what to do, go find him and bring his grey head down to the grave." David had harbored resentment in his heart, it had consumed a portion of his life- that was revealed in this spiritual

giant's final words. If that could happen to David, we know it could happen to us. We might go through life with a heckler following us around reminding us of a reason to hold hatred in our hearts. Don't let that happen! Let it go and move on! Let God's love fill the heart completely.

I read a story about a bride and groom who were separated by his enlistment in the Civil War. They wrote letters to each other and kept in close contact through the mail until his letters abruptly stopped. The bride to be was so worried - she reread his letters and lived in agony with the questions of what had happened. Finally she received a letter not in his handwriting that stated an injury- he had lost both of his arms and was relieving her of the commitment to marriage. Her reaction was so poignant. She boarded a train, found him in a military hospital, and said, "These will be your hands now! And they will never let you go!"

That is a perfect example of God's agape love for us. We can learn how to love from 1 Corinthians, but we can also learn what God is like. Since God is love, try reading the verse using God in place of the word love. God never fails- God will never let us go no matter what we lose in this life. When we lose something, or when we are lost, God is always looking for us and trying to locate us again to tell us that love never ends.

There is no better way to see how to live a life of perfect love than to look at the life of Jesus. The way that Jesus treated others, forgave, held others to a high standard and spoke the truth in love, the way that Jesus behaved so humbly- it is truly a picture of perfect love. There was no selfishness in Jesus. He lived for others completely and perfectly.

When we walk with Jesus in our lives and exemplify his love to others, we do experience a connection to the divine. It is possible and sometimes we even realize that we are living in the midst of God's perfect love. There are moments of day to day life when we serve others, love others, pray for others, that God's love is magnified in our hearts. And there are special moments in life when God's love washes over us and we feel overcome...the birth of a baby, at the graveside of a loved one when we are lifting prayers of thanksgiving for a precious life, a wedding. May our experiences of God's love fill our lives, connecting us to God every moment of every day. Love pours from heaven in a flowing stream, and every time we drink of it we gain a glimpse of the heavenly kingdom. When I see the look on a

groom's face when he sees his bride appearing at the back of the aisle about to begin her wedding procession, it is as if he is seeing heaven for the first time.

We are called to no greater task than to love others with God's agape love. God wants us to realize that we are called to lives of love. Yes, love is the medicine of humanity and let us not forget that it is also very heaven oriented. Love is the music of the soul. God wants love to be the soundtrack of our lives. All that we do or say, all that we are, should be mediated by God's love. Jesus stresses a new commandment with the disciples, "Love one another!" Let us not forget that there is nothing more important to God in our lives than this commandment to love.

When the final curtain falls and our lives are over, I doubt that God would ask, "How were your grades?" or "How clean did you keep your house?" or "How well did you perform at your job?" But I would not be surprised if God, as he embraces us and welcomes us into the kingdom of heaven, asks, "How much did you love?"

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